

Training is Essential

FAQs About ETT

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If you are a new trustee, or if you have been a trustee for a little longer, you have heard about the Essential Trustee Training and Continuing Trustee Education sessions offered by IAFPD (Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts). Hopefully, you have taken advantage of these training sessions. If you have not, we strongly recommend that you commit to learning more about your role as a public official this year. Educated trustees are better public officials. Here are some questions that our office receives about the ETT program throughout the year.

Q. Is Essential Trustee Training required by law?

A. Essential Trustee Training is NOT required by law. The Fire Protection District Act (70 ILCS 705/6(c)) reads:

"...any trustee of a fire protection district who completes a training program on fire protection district administration approved by the Office of the State Fire Marshal may receive additional compensation above the compensation otherwise provided in this Section. The additional compensation shall be equal to 50% of such other compensation. In order to continue to receive the additional compensation, the trustee must attend annual training approved by the Office of the State Fire Marshal on a continuing basis thereafter."

If you are a compensated fire protection district trustee in Illinois, this Act tells your district how much compensation you are entitled to. Trustees who have completed the ETT program are entitled to 50% additional compensation if

they maintain the required three hours of Continuing Trustee Education each year. If you have not completed the ETT program or the required three CE hours each year and your district is compensating you at the maximum rate, your district is in violation of the Act.

Q. Do any programs that IAFPD, NIAFPD, or the Fire Marshal's office qualify as ETT Training?

A. The Essential Trustee Training program is a 12-hour trustee education program divided into three parts. ETT Part 1 is Organization and Administration. Part 2 is Finances, Procurement and Legal Liability. Part 3 is Personnel & Human Resources. IAFPD is the only approved organization presenting this program. Those who complete all three parts receive a certificate from the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. NIAFPD and IAFPD both offer CE programs each year.

Q. Is the ETT program offered online?

A. No part of the ETT program is currently offered Online or "on-demand." However, the continued education hours are offered on-demand in IAFPD's online library.

Q. If a trustee does not complete CE hours for a few years, are they required to retake the ETT classes?

A. If you have completed the 12-hour ETT program, you are not required to do it again. You can use a combination of CE sessions to make up for the hours you did not complete. Keep in mind that any year that you are not in compliance with

CE requirements, you are not entitled to additional trustee compensation.

Q. I have completed more than 12 hours of education at conferences and online. Does that count?

A. Congratulations! Everyone who works with fire protection districts can benefit from these programs. However, if the program is not called Essential Trustee Training, it is not Essential Trustee Training.

Q. Who should take Essential Trustee Training?

A. Everyone involved in fire protection district administration will benefit from this training. We have many fire chiefs, fire protection district administrative staff, and officers complete the ETT program.

If your district has trustees who have not yet completed the ETT training, we want to hear from you. Our goal is to have all Illinois fire protection district trustees educated. We want to know how we can make programs more accessible to you. The IAFPD Foundation provides scholarships to district trustees when the district budget may not allow for it.

Information about future training sessions, online educational offerings, scholarships, and more is available on IAFPD.ORG. If you have questions about any of the training that IAFPD presents, please contact our office.

The next scheduled presentation of the ETT Program is November 6 & 7 at Plainfield FPD and Barrington Countryside FPD. For details and registration visit the Essential Trustee Training page at IAFPD.ORG. We look forward to seeing you at a training session soon! ■